

The Tomb of Nabi Yusha' in the Upper Galilee: The Evolution of a Sacred Place

Khalid Sindawi

Al Qasimi Academy

Abstracts

Among the six sites regarded as the burial place of Joshua bin Nun, the one of Nabi Yusha', located on the eastern slopes of the Upper Galilee highlands was regarded with great reverence by the "Matawila" or "Mutawalli" Shi'ites in Southern Lebanon and in the Galilee, including the inhabitants of the village Al-Nabi Yusha'. Jewish tradition tends to reject the identification of Joshua's tomb at this site but rather identify it with a site in Samaria, and therefore this place did not become part of the traditional sanctified gravesites of saintly figures found throughout the Galilee. This article is related to the date and reason for the construction of the mausoleum in its present form, and of the two domes over it, as well as to the tradition of pilgrimage to the site and the cult of the local Shi'ite inhabitants. In its second part, the article refers to the cultic changes that occurred after the establishment of the State of Israel, and to the question of the location of the tomb today in the process of creating a sacred landscape in the Galilee. The main claim of the article is that tracing the changes in the cult of this site will show the geopolitical importance of this place on the one hand, and the changing social values of the surrounding inhabitants and of the sovereign authority on the other.

Keywords: Nabi Yusha, Upper Galilee, Matawila, Shi'ite, Sacred Places.

Introduction

1. Sacred Places and Landscape Design

The concept of 'landscape design' refers to the process of turning a geographical space into a 'place' of symbolic significance. The term 'place' refers to the system of social relations within a defined expanse and to the system of interpretations that is created through the interrelations between society and environment as part of the process of forming an identity. The 'place' as opposed to geographical space, concerns a symbolic area which is granted significance by people. The creation of symbols in a landscape has a central function in constructing a social identity and also in an attempt to establish ownership on a geographical and human expanse. Therefore throughout history, leaders and societies have invested great efforts in shaping the landscape. A "reading" of the designing factor and of the system of symbols embodied in a structure can teach us much about the nature of personal, group and cultural/moral power

struggles of human society in relation to the landscape unit under examination, such as the structure that stands before us which represents the transition from a religious identity to a national identity. To make a place significant in the symbolic sense requires adjusting the values that the place represents to the values of that the society wishes to reflect and to represent. In this regard, the creation of a landscape is a long process of power struggles and dialogue between different interest groups. This connection, between landscape, culture and politics is one of the outstanding characteristics of geographical cultural research that is developing in recent years. Such a reading of landscape is an interpretative reading that is dependent upon the cultural, political and moral context of the readers.

Places associated with sacred cults are one of the prominent expressions in the processes of landscape design, and especially in the cult of sacred burial sites which is practiced in various religions and runs like a chain linking pagan religious practices with those of monotheistic religions. In its spiritual sense, pilgrimage is an expression of communion between the believer and the saintly figure who can relieve the distress of a person or mediate between him and the deity. A distinction should be made between local saints and universal saints who draw faithful believers from around the world or are recognized at various cultic places in it. A cult merges the holy man and his characteristics with the geographical location and its importance. From the geographical-religious aspect, this implies establishing a link with a sacred or historical land area. The link can express a real or sovereign hold over the place or preservation of a historical affiliation as the basis for creating a real connection in the present without sovereignty. A clear expression of this can be seen in the centrality of the cult for Jewish holy men in Israel, especially during medieval times when prostrations over the graves of the righteous were 'mandatory stops' during voyages to the Land of Israel.

The cult of sacred places is usually ascribed to the lower levels of society in order to show the reservations of the intellectual or religious level against this type of cult. Another interpretation claims that popular cults are anti-establishment such as the Muslim Sufi or the Jewish Hassidic cult, which in fact serves the opposition leadership in going against the establishment. These two interpretations are not identical, but they are similar in character, and frequently the creation of a cult or its intensification reflects the process of harnessing the popular forces of the ritual for the benefit of creating presence in the landscape (national or any other) and in fact to strengthen the claim of ownership over the land. Strengthening ownership is done both by creating a physical link and by creating awareness of 'place' through emphasizing the symbolic significance of the landscape and the social or religious values associated with it.

If the cult is of a local nature it can be interpreted as an anti-establishment measure or an anti-centralization one (a struggle between the center and the periphery). Sometimes the cult is a direct result of a conflict between various groups, or different rulers over control of an area. Tracing the changes in the map of the sacred places in a certain area can inform us to a great extent about the social and political changes in it. The transfer of sacred sites near a certain place, within the borders of a sanctuary or adjacent to it, often reflects a relative increase or decrease in the public or religious status of the sacred elements in the sanctuary or of its cultic elements. We can testify to changes in the political or economic status of those who set up the cultic element or their supporters. Transference to other places or the decrease in the value of the cult

and the lessening of the number of pilgrims can indicate changes in the economic and political status of the cultic site. Changes in cultural values, in political sovereignty, or in the composition of the population will usually affect the cultural landscape, since they will require renewed construction of local identity in relation to the place and the landscape. Places that were central will be minimized or abandoned – or will be redesigned by a completely different symbolization to indicate the change.

The function of the Nabi Yusha' tomb in the Galilee landscape has changed over the years. The history of the building and its surroundings tell a story about the struggles over control of the landscape at different periods of time, and therefore signify the geo-political importance of the area. The main change in which we will deal concerns the War of Independence and the resulting changes in the map of sacred sites. The alterations in borders and their definition as enemy borders which cannot be crossed by pilgrims, created a detachment of several places from the social and cultural connections on which they had depended, and required the creation of renewed affiliation to the landscape for changes in the local population changes and in the sovereignty over the area. Thus the site of the Nabi Yusha' tomb in the Galilee was detached from its main adherents, the Matawila Shi'ites who left their villages in the Galilee, and the remaining area required renewed design by the State of Israel.

1a. The Cult of Sacred Places in Islam

In order to understand the cult of sacred places in Islam, it is necessary to mention a number of basic concepts. The cult of sacred places in Islam is based on the term 'Awliya' which spread across all the Islamic countries as part of the main religious practices and the foundations of the monotheistic worship of Allah. Originally, Islam had commanded non-cooperation with any other power or creature with God in managing the affairs of the world and in responding to the requests of human beings. The cult of sainthood clearly stood in opposition to this basic tenet. But during the 12th century the Sufi Muslims bridged over between the acts of the karamat al-'Awliya' The miracles of saints and the main creed of Islam, to the extent that the karama miracle, of the wali was not considered as heresy against Allah and Islam.

The Visits ziyarat (pilgrimage and visits to the holy sites): The rapid spread of the cult of saints was accompanied by the phenomenon of visit graves of saints. The character of the visits ziyarat differed from one country to another, from one wali saint to another, and even from one place to another in the same area. It was frequently a local cult or a local pagan cult that was converted into a universal story acceptable in religious writings.

The subject of sacred cults in Islam has gained the interest of many Islamic researchers, mainly in cults during medieval times, since scientists and researchers of Muslim culture who traveled in Islamic countries left detailed descriptions of cultic sites and of the routes that led to them. Among these travelers was the famous al-Abu Al-Hasan Ali Ibn Abu Bakr Al-Harawi, who recorded the story of his travels in Islamic countries which contained a description of all the tombs of the saints that he had seen and references to all that he heard about the Saints concerning miraculous acts.

Another famous traveler who wrote at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, was Al-Shaykh Abd Al-Ghani Ibn Isma'il Al-Nabulsi who traveled in the lands of Al-Sham (the

area of Syria and Palestine), as well as in Egypt and the Hejaz. His description includes details of pilgrimage ziyara places to the tombs of the 'Awliya', of the prophets, and the sacred places he saw.

A Western view of the cult of saints in Islam can be found in the research work of Ignác (Yitzhaq Yehuda) Goldziher (1850-1921), considered as one of the founders of Oriental studies. The son of a German-Jewish family that settled in Hungary, he especially researched the relations between Islam and Judaism in Arabic literature written by Jews. Among his other works, he initiated the writing of the 'Encyclopedia of Islam'. Goldziher was attracted to the study of mysticism in Islam, researched the Shi'ites and the mystic elements in the Sufi cult, and also referred to the Mazarat and the tombs of saints and those close to Allah.

The Land of Israel, the Cult of Saints and the "Mazarat" Shrines: In spite of the many arguments around the holiness of the Land of Israel in the Muslim world, religious believers were aware of the great importance of the country. Although there was no superiority for the holy places in the Land of Israel (as in Christian and Jewish cults), the country was filled with maqamat and the tombs of saints. These Mazarat Shrines belonged to the 'Awliya' and the prophets, and they were of interest to many researchers. Some of the popular traditions also ascribed holiness to certain people from the period before the emergence of Islam. The מְזָרָא and the מְקָאמָא have many aspects in common, but each of them constitutes a story in itself and an independent research topic. Every holy place is characterized by its own Ziyarah which takes place in a certain season mawsim of the year or at a selected occasion during the course of the year. For every wali among the 'Awliya' there is a tradition of legendary stories is woven that "proves" the miraculous acts performed by it. These numerous stories and tombs raised the status of the Land of Israel (and of the Balad Al-Sham) as a sacred and blessed country in which lived the prophets and the pious adherents of God.

The beginning of Muslim cultic practices at the gravesites of saints and prophets in the Land of Israel is ascribed to the Ayyubic period. Al-Harawi whom we have already mentioned, left a list of many Mazarat and sacred places throughout the country, including the Galilean villages of Kana, Manda and Kabul. 'Abd Al-Ghani Al-Nabils who was also mentioned before, referred among his accounts to Acre and Shfaram. Goldhizer also mentioned Acre, and explained how the Muslims in the city invented a prophet called "Ak" who was given honor and esteem as other saints in order to strengthen their hold on the city.

Modern studies have changed its geographical regional interest in accordance with the centers of national struggle which gradually sharpened. During the 1920s, Tawfik Canaan wrote about the Ziyarat and the sacred places for Muslims in Israel and focused especially on places that were located in the center of the country and regions around Shechem and Jerusalem. During the 1930s, Raghib Al-Khalidi and others also wrote focused studies on sacred places around Jerusalem and Shechem. The establishment of the State of Israel led to increasing interest in the description and research of places in the country that were sacred to Islam, besides being due to the competition over designing the national landscape and the preservation of collective memory. Some of the research tried to show the convergence or the competition between Jewish and Muslim cults of the same places.

1b. The Cult of Sacred Places in Judaism

Parallel with the documentation of the cult of sacred places in Islam, the first period of documentation for the Jewish cult also occurred during medieval times. The Talmud tells us about the custom of visiting the graves of the righteous, but not of their sacredness. It says that Caleb ben Yefuneh, when he came with the twelve spies to Canaan, prostrated himself over the graves of the Patriarchs in Hebron and prayed they would help him to prevent his friends from giving a bad account of the country. Resh Lakish, as it says in the Talmud, used to visit the burial caves of the righteous, especially that of Rabbi Yihya and his sons, and that he had fasted until he saw Rabbi Yihya in his dreams. In spite of the testimonies about the cult of visiting the graves of the righteous during the Talmudic period, the Sages usually had reservations about it, and it was not an institutional cult.

During medieval times, the importance of graves increased because they signified the link between the righteous man and his teachings, and also the link with the Land of Israel.

The Karaite of the 10th century, Sahal ben Masliah, complained against the custom of Jews to light candles and burn incense in sacred places – a custom that he considered to be heretical. There is clear information about the cult of the graves of holy men in Judaism during the period of the Crusades, from the 12th century onwards. Three famous manuscripts of the 12th century, those of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela who traveled widely during the years 1165-1173, Rabbi Petahiah of Regensburg, from 1185-1187, and the story of the travels of Rabbi Jacob ben Netanel Hacohen, testify to this cult. Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, of that same century, emphasized holy sites in his poems about Zion: “If only I could wander in the places that were revealed to your prophets and messengers, I would pass by and stand over the graves of my fathers and prostrate myself in Hebron”.

During the Middle Ages, the cult became institutionalized, special buildings were constructed to mark the holy places, special prayers were prescribe, and special ceremonies for pilgrimage to every site. Popular need for this cult increased, as it did in Islam, despite halachic reservations. The cult of the graves of the righteous was an accepted ritual. It was told about the holy Ari (Rabbi Isaac Luria), who returned to the Land of Israel in 1570, and used to visit the graves of the righteous with his disciples, that he decided to live in Safed to be near the tomb of Shimon bar Yohai in Meron.

The increasing trend in pilgrimage journeys and the rising number of graves of the righteous and burial traditions, especially of biblical and Talmudic figures, symbolizes besides the tradition of holiness the geographical struggle to perpetuate the claim of a historical link of the people to its land (not to mention the ownership of the land by the people). The commemoration and visits to the graves of ancestors serves to ensure the physical connection of the people to its land and its heritage for generations to come until the time of redemption, and on the other hand it serves as a vital link to it even against the rise in Christian interest in the land of the Bible during Crusader times. The cult also exists outside the borders of the Land of Israel. Especially among Eastern Jewry, a cult of holy sites was developed in the countries of the Diaspora, the earliest among them in Egypt and Babylon, and from there to other places, particularly in North Africa. But the main sites were those in the Land of Israel which have a special status.

2. The Prophet Joshua (Yusha') and his Importance

According to the Bible, Joshua bin Nun was a leader of the Children of Israel after the death of Moses and the conqueror of Canaan. He was of the tribe of Ephraim, and his name 'Hoshea' was changed by Moses into 'Yehoshua'. Joshua was the faithful pupil of Moses and it is told that he accompanied him when he went up Mount Sinai. He was a military hero and fought against the Amalekites in Refidim. When he was sent with the twelve spies to tour the land of Canaan, he and Caleb ben Yefuneh were the only ones who did not malign the country and so gained his position as the leader to conquer it. His appointment as the heir of Moses, according to the Bible, was ordered by God himself.

The biblical character of Joshua is a combination of a prophetic leader and a military and national leader. He led the Children of Israel during the conquest of the country which was accomplished with many miraculous events. He was also responsible for setting out the borders for the tribal territories. It is told that before his death he held large gatherings of the people and commanded them to refrain from assimilation and from idol worship. Legends tell us that Joshua married Rahab the harlot who converted to Judaism, and among their descendants were eight priestly prophets including Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Joshua and Rahab had only daughters. He was 60 years old when he assumed the leadership of the people.

The Qur'an does not mention Joshua by name, but his existence is implied in relation to the conquest of the country. According to the Qur'an, when the Children of Israel were afraid of the Amalekites, they were encouraged by two God-fearing men identified as Joshua bin Nun and Caleb ben Yefuneh. The servant boy of Moses who accompanied him in the journey to Khadr (or Khidr) was also identified with Joshua. Many details from the stories about Joshua in the Bible and in Jewish legends are hinted at in the 'Stories of the Prophets' in Islam in various versions.

Muslim legends added details to the figure of Joshua that are not found in the Bible. These details stress the prophetic element in his character such as the duty imposed on him to arouse the true faith in Egypt so that Moses could end his life peacefully, and he was presented as a prophet even during his life.

The Shi'ites link the figure of Ali ibn Talb (661 CE) the cousin of the Prophet Muhammad and his son-in-law, with that of Joshua bin Nun (Yusha' ibn-Nun). Ali ibn Talb is the central figure in Shi'ite belief and therefore his connection with Joshua (Yusha') intensifies the cult for the latter and gives him extreme importance. According to Shi'ite interpretation, he was the first of the eminent figures who were exemplary persons, continuing the line of the prophets to which Yusha' belonged. In accordance with this, Yusha' also received the religious testament (wasiyya) from the Prophet Muhammad. Many lines of resemblance were drawn between Ali and Joshua, to the extent that the name Yusha' became one of the names for Ali, in order to emphasize that the role of Ali was to redeem the Shi'ites just as Moses had redeemed the Children of Israel. This link also stresses that the roots of the Shi'ites are in the distant past, since the days of Joshua, and preceded their appearance on the stage of history.

3. Location of the Tomb of Nabi Yusha': Controversy and Competition

The examination of the location for the burial place of Nabi Yusha' is an instructive lesson in the history of the creation of cultic sites related to past heroes of the country and of the surrounding areas, especially in connection with the multiplicity of tombs ascribed to the same figure. Sometimes it concerns marking a tomb to remember the figure and its link to that place, and sometimes through the belief that this was the real place of burial. The burial site of Moses, for example, which is unknown according to the biblical story, is identified in Islam by a number of sites between the region of Jerusalem and Damascus and their environs.

Location of the Tomb of Nabi Yusha' in Islam: According to what is written in the Book of Joshua, the place of his burial is in 'Timmath-serah in the mount of Ephraim'. This indication led to the most accepted tradition in both Judaism and Islam of sanctifying the location of the tomb in the Palestinian village of Kifl Haris, southwest of Shechem and near the city of Ariel. The tradition, which is apparently of Samaritan origin, may have preserved an ancient Israelite tradition.

Additional traditions locate the burial place in at the following sites:

- a. In Jordan, about 3 km northwest of the city of al-Salt in the Balqa region in the Moabite province, on a hill known by the name of Taff Yusha'.
- b. In the city of Tiberias, east of the Al-Yasmin Mosque, within a courtyard corridor is the place of burial for 70 prophets who were killed for their faith by the Israelites.
- c. In Northern Syria near the cave of Al-Na'aman.
- d. In the eastern part of Istanbul, on a hill which today is called 'Tel-Yusha'.
- e. In the region of Takht Foolad (or Foolad) near the city of Isfahan in Central Iran.

The various locations for the tomb of Nabi Yusha' and the controversy that they caused, testifies to its main function and to the aspirations and purposes of these places that wished to possess this central figure and thus created a sense of local pride and affiliation. The numerous sites for the tomb indicate competition between Shechem, the place that has the strongest tradition of all, and the other places. The 'proofs' offered to verify the location of a burial site is sometimes based only on local legends, dreams, or evidence of folklore or anthropological importance. However, since this concerns a universally known figure and not a local saint, it was necessary to set up the tradition within the Islamic belief framework, without exaggeration or reduction below the consensual level.

The recognition of the tomb of the prophet in the Galilee Panhandle apparently obtained its validity in the Islamic world after the erection of the structure above the tomb in 1773 CE. From that date onwards, the site was famed as a well-known place and the cult of that tomb was extensively developed. At a later stage, and until 1948 – as we shall see below, additions were made to the structure and the place was continually broadened. Besides the physical development, the celebration of the cult became a famous event in the Muslim world. The first to describe the Nabi Yusha' celebrations at this place was al-Maqdisi (d. c.990 CE), who also noted that the holiness of the prophet sanctified the entire area of Ramot Naftali.

Location of the Tomb according to Judaism: The earliest accepted tradition in Judaism links the location of the tomb with Khirbet Haris near Shechem. The Byzantine tradition mentioned by Eusebius in his book *Onomasticon*, identified the tomb of Joshua in that same area, a little south of it, in the environs of the village Tamna near Ramallah, and this was apparently a regional tradition. There are reports of Jews visiting the tomb in Khirbet Haris, at least until the First World War, but the custom stopped after this because of the dangers in reaching this place.

Another tradition of the 10th century mentions the tomb in Tiberias. The Persian traveler, Nasir Khusraw noted the location of the tomb in the mosque of Tiberias – implying the identification of a Jewish and Muslim tradition. In the 12th century, a new identification appeared which linked the tomb of Joshua bin Nun with Caleb ben Yefuneh in the Lower Galilee in the region of the Arbel valley, on Mount Nitai. In order to adapt the geographical description that appears in the Book of Joshua with the local landscape, Timnath-serah was transferred from Samaria to the area of Kfar Hittim, through reliance on the continuation of the verse from the Book of Joshua: ‘And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-serah which is in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill of Gaas’”. Mount Hittim provided the Gaash landscape feature through which the tradition could be moved from the mount of Ephraim. In order to strengthen the tradition, the pilgrimage day was the 28th of Iyyar, the anniversary of Joshua’s death. The search for the tomb of Joshua in the Galilee suited tradition since the Galilee was the place where the tribes of Israel entered their country. A reference to this can be found in the writings of Petahiah of Regensburg that there was a synagogue in Tiberias in which Joshua bin Nun was said to have prayed when he crossed the Jordan River.

From the beginning of the 13th century, the burial site in Karnei Hittim was identified with the place where Jethro was buried and was abandoned by Jewish tradition. From then onwards, the Jewish tradition of the tomb in Timnath-serah in the mountains of Ephraim in Samaria was strengthened without competing sites. Reiner attributes the acceptance of the southern tradition to the process of registering traditions for European pilgrims who wished to see a single geographical area in the Land of Israel that included biblical sites. This process negated the local Galilean evidence for Galilee as a separate and independent geographical unit that had no interest in parallel traditions in other areas. Since the process of documenting a tradition was mainly connected with travelers, that is to say with a process external to the Land of Israel, there is a reasonable basis to assume that the local cult which identified the burial place of Joshua in the Galilee was still preserved in the period after it disappeared from the documentation in our hands.

We saw that at least two places for locating the burial site there is an identical geographical-landscape basis for the tomb in both the Muslim and Jewish traditions: in Khirbet Haris in the mountains of Ephraim and in the region of Tiberias. But no commonly shared tradition developed in the region of the Galilee Panhandle. The Jewish tradition did not identify the tomb of the prophet in that place. The asset of that region was nearby, at Tel Kadash on Keren Naftali, which was sacred to other biblical heroes whose stories of bravery included those of national and military leadership, such as Deborah the Prophetess, Barak ben Avinoam, and Yael the wife of Heber the Kenite. The city of Kadash itself was a Canaanite city listed among those conquered by Joshua bin Nun. The location of these tombs are noted by Benjamin of Tudela (1130-1173), Rabbi Shmuel ben Shimon (1211), and they are also mentioned in the book “Seder Hadorot”

(Order of the Generations) which quotes the book “Glilot Eretz Yisrael” (Scrolls of the Land of Israel). However, Vilnai mentions he has lineage antecedents who refers to a midrash on Joshua bin Nun and Kadesh Naftali.

4. The Village of Al-Nabi Yusha’

The shrine of Nabi Yusha’ is located in the center of the village Al-Nabi Yusha’. This village is one of the seven Shi’ite (Mutawili) villages that became part of the territory of Mandatory Palestine in 1922. This is a small village situated on the eastern slopes of the mountains of Naftali in the Galilee Panhandle, at a height of 350 m above sea level, northeast of the city of Safed, overlooking the Huleh Valley, the Golan Heights and Mount Hermon to the east.

To the west of the village is the flourishing Kadesh Valley, the only karstic valley in the Galilee Panhandle. The lands belonging to the villages of Qadas and Malkia are on the west side of the village, the lands of the Jahula (today Kibbutz Yiftah) to the north and northeast were inhabited by the Almarid tribe. The lands to the south and southwest of the village belonged to the Bismun tribe, and today their apple plantations are used by Moshav Ramot Naftali and Kibbutz Yiftah.

The village lands comprised 3,617 dunams, half of them level and half hilly. On the level lands they grew fruit trees (figs and grapes) and sometime wheat. The villagers lived on the produce of their plantations, the raising of cattle, and also income from the pilgrimages to the tomb of the prophet. The villagers provided services to the thousands of pilgrims who visited this place.

According to tradition, the village was founded in 1773 after Nasif Ibn Nassar, the ally of Dhaher al-Omar, built the shrine over the tomb of Nabi Yusha’. The al-Ghul family, whose origins are from the Shi’ite village of Meiss EjJabal in Southern Lebanon, arrived here to serve as retainers for the sacred compound, and also began to cultivate the lands near the tomb. During the Ottoman period, the villagers were exempted from tax payments and from werko (property tax) because the village was registered as belonging to the Waqf. By an agreement that was made after the establishment of the British Mandate, the lands of the village remained sacred land. The importance of this place for the Lebanese can be derived from the fact that from 1926 the agreement between the two Mandatory authorities of Palestine and Syria it was decided that the lands of the village would remain sacred, and that they could not be expropriated by the governments of Syria or Palestine. As for the pilgrims who came to prostrate themselves over the tomb of the prophet at the end of the Ramadan, it was decided that they would be exempt from presenting documents and traveling papers. The water sources of the village were meager. There were 18 wells to collect rainwater, each containing about 80-90 cubic meters of water. During times of drought, the inhabitants used to go to the nearby village of Marus. Occasionally, the village suffered from invasions by the Bedouin al-Hamdoun tribe which raid its crops.

During the Mandatory period, the importance of the village rested entirely on pilgrimage to the tomb of the prophet. The village was the smallest one in the Safed district and apparently did not take part in the Palestinian national agitation that arose during the 1930s. The villagers did not participate in the Arab rebellion of 1936-1939 (except for two well-known inhabitants: Abbas al-Abd and Ali Mohammed al-Ghul). No national committee was established in the village as it was in other villages. Reports of the Haganah intelligence services of 1943 show that there were

only 100 inhabitants in the village, and all of them were members of the al-Ghul family which apparently originated from a village in Southern Lebanon – Meiss Ej-Jabal. Their numbers decreased further, and at the end of the Mandate period the village had only 70 inhabitants. The village had no school and the children studied in nearby villages. There was one shop which belonged to the mukhtar, Mahmud Hasan al-Ghul, who was acceptable to the villagers according to the reports, and also served as an imam. The Haganah reports which stressed the peaceful nature of the village, took no interest in the tomb or the cult around it.

On May 17, during the course of the Hiram operation, IDF forces conquered the village. Most of the inhabitants, as all the other inhabitants of the Mutawili villages in the Galilee, fled to Southern Lebanon. The village was abandoned and destroyed, but the structure of the tomb was not damaged. The lands of the village were annexed to the lands of Moshav Ramot Naftali which was founded in 1945, and which is located 2 km south of the village. Most of the villagers are now living in the villages of Meiss Ej-Jabal, Shakra, al-Shahabiyya, and in the southern neighborhood of Beirut. In 1998 they numbered 499 souls.

5. Description of the Shrine

The site includes two prayer rooms and living quarters on the eastern and western sides which served the person in charge of the shrine, his family and guests. Vilnai described the tomb during the 1930s as “a small building overlooking the Huleh Valley, the Golan Heights and Mount Hermon. In a small room in this building, on which two white domes were built, there is an ordinary monument constructed of stones. Suspended from the ceiling were lamps and also an ostrich egg, a gift from one of the visitors”.

North of the site were a few houses that were destroyed in 1948. The western room of the site is the main one with a large dome which is daubed like the walls with colored plaster. In the center of the room stands the monumental tomb of Nabi Yusha'. It is long and covered with woven material and colored cloths. In the southern wall there is a prayer niche (a maghreb) and on the wall above it two frames in which there are inscriptions in written Arabic “hold fast, all of you together, to the cable of Allah”. “There is none like Ali the hero and There is no sword but Dhu al-fiqar”.

In the eastern wall there is a window with bars so that the people who are praying can hear the preacher in the eastern room, which is also a domed room, well built and plastered. On the southern wall is a framed inscription in Arabic in which it is written:

“Everyone that is thereon will pass away”.

O merciful God/ have mercy on your servant whose fate is death”.

The inscription is written in a beautiful hand [Khattat] " Calligraphis" by the person who inscribed his name at the bottom: Mahmud al-Ajami. In this room there is a large window from which one can have a lovely view eastward to the Huleh Valley, and a door to exit from it to the south. In the southwest corner of the room there is a concrete ledge about 16 cm high which is the monument of the tomb of Hamed Albeck, one of the Shi'ite leaders in Southern Lebanon. In the walls of both rooms there are narrow loopholes. North of one of them was a courtyard paved with stones, in which there was a well and beside it was a dried up English walnut tree. On the

southwestern side was a grove with a few remaining trees, and among them a giant oak that had survived because of the holiness of the place. It was 3.15 m high and the longest branch was 1.26 m. This tree was called "Shajart umm al-Nabi Yusha", "the mother tree of Nabi Yusha".

Northwest of the building was a cemetery for the villagers, in accordance with the custom to be buried near a holy person. On the west side of the southern annex there was a closed courtyard with tombs in it. The site today is exposed to the cattle herds grazing around it and causing damage to the place.

5a. The Trees near the Tomb

The adoration of trees is a universal phenomenon across religions, and originates in ancient pagan cults. The personification of trees or their description as "dwellings of spirits" is well known. Trees and groves that were sanctified were occasionally placed at the center of a cult or derived their sanctity from their proximity to temples. As with the cult of tombs, this popular cult was preserved through adaptation in monotheistic faiths in spite of opposition by religious institutions. The trees that retained a tradition of holiness also served as symbols of power, territorial markings, places for meetings and for legal matters, and sites for cultic rites and burials – and therefore were also preserved as indications of significant landscapes. In the Land of Israel, trees were characteristic for the tombs of saints, such as the oak, fig, carob, olive, mulberry and terebinth. Their sacredness did not derive from the type of tree but from their proximity to sacred places. A survey conducted by Tawfik Canaan at the beginning of the Mandate period indicates that out of 128 trees near the tombs of saints, 30 of them were oak trees, 25 fig trees, 21 carob trees, 16 olive trees, 14 mulberry trees, 12 plum trees, and 10 terebinths. In a few cases there were other trees, such as cypresses, pines, sycamores, pomegranates, and date palms.

Trees near the tombs of saints sometimes gave their names as an additional term for them, and alternatively, a tree was often given the name of the saint. Among many religions, popular customs developed around the trees such as hanging cloths and other objects, a custom meant to remind the saint of the request by the person who hung them. According to popular beliefs, these trees were immune to disease, and even from damage by locusts. The branches should not be cut and the twigs that fell from them could be gathered only for use in connection with the tomb, in the same way as vows or cultic feasts in honor of the saint. The fruit of the trees could be eaten at that place but it was forbidden to take them away. Sometimes the fruit was the property of the Waqf or could be sold and the proceeds used for the upkeep of the household. Serious punishments for stealing from these trees can be learnt from the following popular story. Once one of the guards from the village of Urta passed by and rested near the tomb of Sheikh al-Mansouri. When he saw the beautiful grapes growing there he could not resist the temptation, and in spite of the warnings, he took some of the fruit. Not long after this he began to vomit blood again and again, and could not find relief from his illness until he sacrificed a sheep in honor of the saint to compensate him.

Among the important trees near the tomb of Nabi Yusha', the first was the walnut tree that was planted in the northern courtyard. Today the tree is dry and dead from the damage caused by time and neglect. On the western side, there are a few natural woodland trees that have remained. The most important of them is the giant terebinth that survived because of the holiness of the

place. It is 3.85 m tall and the longest branch is 8.10 m. This tree was called the "Shjart umm al-nabi Yusha'" "mother tree of Nabi Yusha'.

It is difficult to determine why this specific tree was chosen for the saint. Apparently it was by chance, since the walnut is a fruit tree that was planted by the villagers and became sacred in the course of time. The other tree, the terebinth, represents the natural plants in the area of the grove which was sanctified later on, and symbolizes the eternal holiness of the shrine.

5b. Erection of the Shrine: Landscape Design as Part of the Struggle for Control over the Area

Nabi Yusha' is situated near Jabal Amil, in the mountains of Southern Lebanon, the Shi'ite center in the region. During the 18th century, this area was where struggles occurred between local rulers, as well as internal conflicts between Shi'ite families, including the family of Ibn Nasser. The governor of the Galilee at that time was Daher al-Omar of the Zidani family which arrived in the Land of Israel at the end of the 17th century from the Hejaz. Al-Omar, as part of the process to establish his rule planned to take control over the Amel mountains then under the leadership of Nazif al-Nasser, who resided in the fortress in the village of Tabnin. According to the story, Daher al-Omar sent a letter to Nazif in which he demanded the transfer of two villages, Al-Bassa, and Marun Al-Ras, to him, but Nazif rejected this demand and declared war against al-Omar. The latter went out at the head of an army to conquer Jabal Amel, but was defeated in a number of battles by Sheikh Nazif, and peace was restored between them only through the mediation of Sheikh Sa'ad, the brother of al-Omar. In 1767, the two men signed a defense alliance in Acre because a common threat loomed over the two local rulers. The new Wali of Damascus, Utman al-Khurji, who was appointed to his position in 1760, determined to weaken the rising power of al-Omar, and to resume his control over the area of Jabal Amel and the Galilee region as far as Haifa. To the south, it was Muhammad Bek Abu Al-Dahab parts of Balad al-Sham, even reaching Damascus and conquering it for a short time in 1771. In 1774 the noose tightened around the two rulers in the north when Abu al-Dahab encamped in Haifa and threatened to advance northwards. In Constantinople, the Sultan Abd al-Hamid replaced Mustafa III and wanted to strengthen his control over the Ottoman Empire. As the story goes, Sheikh Nazif made a vow that if God keeps Abu al-Dahab away and prevents him from conquering Jabal Amel (the Naftali mountains) he would build a shrine over the tomb of Nabi Yusha'. On the night of June 10, when Abu al-Dahab advanced from Acre towards Jabal Amel, he suddenly died in his camp near Acre, so Daher al-Omar and Sheikh Nazif could breathe easily. Sheikh Nazif kept his vow and built the shrine.

Less than a year later, Daher al-Omar, the ally of the Mutawili, ended his career on the stage of history, and his place was inherited by Ahmad al-Jazar. Disputes arose between al-Jazar and the most of the Mutawili inhabitants of Jabal Amel, and the Mutawili tried to promote their autonomy in Northern Galilee and Southern Lebanon. The strengthening of the tomb structure followed by the strengthening of the village was part of this process. Nazif also wanted to intensify Shi'ite presence in that place by creating good conditions for pilgrimage. In addition to the central building he erected another mosque to the west of the shrine and rooms to accommodate visitors.

The establishment of the shrine was not only to praise the name of the prophet but also to mark the “victory” event of Nazif which can be derived from the verses of the poet Sheikh Ibrahim ibn Yahya al-Amali who described the construction of the shrine in the first verse of his poem:

خليفة نصّار المؤيد بالنصر مقام شريف أطلع اليوم شمسهُ

(Honored shrine, the Caliph Nasser strengthened by victory has brightened the sun of this shrine). Al-Amali then notes the date for the construction of the shrine by means of the al-jummal system of calculation, a system that was well known in the poetic world to mark an event mention in poetry. According to this system, the poet wrote the date of the event in the last verse of the poem, after the verb ‘arrakha’ in all its forms (verb forms and the nouns derived from them). Since the poet Sheikh al-Amali wrote three verses in praise of Nazif ibn Nasser, and in the last verse he notes the year in which the shrine was built as 1188 Hegira / 1774 CE, he says in his poem The verses are (al-Tawil meter):

1. خليفة نصّار المؤيد بالنصر مقام شريف أطلع اليوم شمسهُ
2. من الله طول العمر مع وافر الأجر فلذّ بحماه طالبا للذي بتي
3. عليك سلام الله يا ثاوي القبر وقلّ عند إهداء السّلام مؤرّخا

$$130 + 131 + 66 + 11 + 517 + 333 = 1188$$

1. Maqamun sharifun 'atla'a al-yawma shamsuhu khalifatun al-mu'ayyadu bil-nasri
2. faludhdh bihimahi Taliban lilladhi bana mina Allahi tula al-'umri ma' wafiri al-'ajri
3. waqul 'inda 'ihda'I al-salami mu'arirrikhan 'alayka salamu Allahi ya thawi al-qabri

According to the calculation of the value of the letters in the third verse after the word "مُؤرّخا" (Mu'rikhan) these letters indicate the year 1188 Hegira /1774 CE.

Translation of the Verses:

1. Honored shrine, the Caliph Nasser strengthened by victory has brightened the sun of this shrine.
2. [Caliph Nasser] enjoys half the shrine, may Allah grant him long life and much reward.
3. [O shrine visitor] walk near the tomb during your visit. Allah give you peace, O you who dwells in the tomb (1774).

In spite of all the efforts, in the year 1781, al-Jazar was commanded by the Sublime Porte to repress the Shi'ite population in the Galilee. The decisive battle was fought on September 23, 1781 near the village of Yaron in the Upper Galilee (today near Kibbutz Yaron, on the Lebanese side of the border). In this battle, the Mutawili commander of the army was killed and al-Jazar took control over the main Mutawili fortresses, and the region of Jabal Amel was annexed to the area under his rule.

Addition of the Dome over the Tomb Structure

Despite the centralized order, the area remained divided according to traditional family loyalties and subject to internal struggles. In 1269 Hegira/1852 CE, one of the leaders Jabal Amel, Hamad Albeck ibn Abu Hamad Mahmud al-Nassar, called Sheikh al-Mashayikh, passed away. The Sheikh al-Mashayikh was buried close to and on the east side of the Nabi Yusha' tomb. Two years after the death of Hamad Albeck, in 1854, al-Asad added two domes – a large dome over the tomb of Nabi Yusha' and a smaller and lower one over the structure above the tomb of Hamad Albeck. The appearance of the two domes on the two buildings enhanced the place with a perfectly classical character of the Mazar since the domes constituted elements characteristic of the shrines Mazarat. Two domes symbolize eternity: the heavens and the supreme power of Allah who exists forever. The proximity of the burial place of al-Mashiah to the tomb of the prophet strengthened the status of the family among the Shi'ites, both as being responsible and the owners of the holy place and able to do what they wished with the compound, and also symbolically, as those who had received the authorization of the prophet.

In his poetry, Sheikh Ibrahim ibn Sadak described the construction of the two domes, and praised Hamad Albeck who was buried near Nabi Yusha'. He also noted the name of the builder and the construction date of the two domes. Sadak wrote five verses praising Hamad Albeck and in the last verse he mentions the year 1271 Hegira, which is 1854 CE, the year the two domes were built.

The verses are (al-basit meter):

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. qif 'ayuha al-wafidu bil-babi al-ladhi | waqafa al-amlaku fih harasa |
| 2. wa'in dakhalta al-baba fa'iqra' | hamdan wamadhan fi al-sabahi wal-masa |
| 3. fahuwa al-ladhi ma' Yusha' qad jumi'a | biturbatin hasba'uha taqaddasa |
| 4. waqad bana abu al-Su'udi fawqaha baytan | 'ala qawa'id al-majdi rasa |
| 5. fatawal al-sab'a al-'ula mudh arrakhu | baytan 'ala taqwa 'aliyyin 'ussisa |
-
- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. الَّذِي بِالْبَابِ الْوَافِدُ أَيُّهَا قِفْ | حَرَسَا فِيهِ الْأَمْلَاقُ وَقِفْ |
| 2. حَمْدًا فَاقْرَأِ الْبَابَ دَخَلْتَ وَإِنْ | وَالْمَسَا الصَّبَاحُ فِي وَمَدْحًا حَمْدًا |
| 3. جُمِعَا قَدْ يَوْشَعُ مَعَ الَّذِي فَهَوَ | تَقَدَّسَا حَصْبَانُهَا بِتَرْبَةٍ |
| 4. فَوْقَهَا السُّعُودُ أَبُو بَنَى وَقَدْ | رَسَا الْمَجْدُ قَوَاعِدَ عَلَى بَيْتَا |
| 5. أَرْخُوا مَذْ أَلَى السَّيْعِ فَطَاوَلْ | أُسِّسَا عَلَيَّ تَقْوَى عَلَى بَيْتَا |

Translation of the Verses:

1. O, visitor, stand in the entrance [of the tomb], in which the guardian angels stood.
2. When you enter the door, read and praise Hamad in the morning and evening.
3. Hamad is buried together with Yusha' in the earth whose grains are sanctified.

4. Abu al-Saud [nickname of Ali Bek al-Asad] constructed this building over the tomb, whose foundations are based on glory.

5. This building has risen up to the first heavens since it was constructed [in the year 1271 Hegira], it is founded upon the fear of Ali

According to the calculation of the value of the letters after the verb 'Arrakhu these letters show the year 1271 Hegira / 1854 CE.

6. Experience of a Visit to the Nabi Yusha' Shrine

Over the years, the tomb compound turned into a central place for the Shi'ite population in Southern Lebanon and the Galilee, which strengthens the claim that one of the main functions it served was to support and affirm the hold of the Shi'ites in the region in spite of political and sovereignty changes.

At the beginning, the visitors to this place were mainly the inhabitants of the nearby Mutawili villages and the Bedouins of that area. We cannot determine when regular visits began to be conducted to the shrine, but during the colonial period the reference was already made to a strong local tradition that continued despite the fact that in the Mandate agreements this region was detached from a large concentration of the Shi'ite population in Southern Lebanon. Under the French regime, the tomb had been visited during most of the year, but mainly occurred during a specific period in the middle of the month of Sha'ban, and therefore they were defined as a seasonal festival, Mawsim (pl.)Mawasim. An additional period for visits was the last four days of the month of Ramadan, according to the Muslim calendar. Special significance was given to the merrymaking on the 15th of Sha'ban for expressing the connection between Nabi Yusha' and religious believers. After the annexation of the village of Al-Nabi Yusha' to Mandatory Palestine on February 2, 1926, it was agreed between the Mandatory governments of Britain and France to allow the Shi'ite villagers in Southern Lebanon and also the Bedouins in that area to visit the tomb of Nabi Yusha' every year only during the last four days of the month of Ramadan. This centralized the festivities and also broadened its scope and intensity. The pilgrimage was both of a popular and a religious character, in which men, women and children participated, and included festive gatherings at the tomb site to which streamed delegations of thousands of Shi'ite visitors from Southern Lebanon (Mutawilis) and Bedouins living around the area. When the procession neared the site they used to fire into the air and play on double reed pipes to increase the excitement of the worshippers and announce their arrival – a custom that was prohibited during the British Mandate. During the procession, all the visitors gathered together, men and women, and began dancing, clapping their hands, and disporting themselves. According to the descriptions, the procession was arranged in this order: "At the head of the procession marched the flag bearer, followed by musicians, and behind them a few young men who danced and sang around their leader according to the rhythm of the musicians. The leader sang a verse and they repeated it, he waved a sword in the air or a handkerchief and danced with them, and sometimes the musicians joined the dancers, and so the revelers made their way in high spirits until they reached the site". The gatherings at the site were accompanied by various ceremonies, including dances by groups of women and men. Near the tomb, sacrifices and a bazaar were held, vows

were made and religious commandments were fulfilled, such as the first haircut of a child (halakah) and circumcisions.

The festivities were also accompanied by supplications and entreaties of a personal and general nature, especially the many petitions for curing illnesses. Over the building of the tomb and near it they used to tie strips of cloth as a sign for the fulfillment of a religious duty to visit the place. The cloth strips were tied to the bars of the windows, the handles of the doors and windows, and the branches of nearby trees. This custom extended the cultic rites for sacred trees to the tomb structure as well. In this connection, the strip of cloth served as a kind of 'perpetual' reminder to the prophet not to forget the hearts' desires of the faithful, and the cloth strips remained at the place as representing them, drawing upon the supernatural powers of the saint and transferring them to their owners who came after some time to take them back and hold them to their bodies in the belief that they would thus be granted the blessing of Nabi Yusha'. It should be noted that this custom was especially performed by sick people.

The organized pilgrimage to the tomb was discontinued when the State of Israel was established in 1948 and the border with Lebanon was closed.

7. Location of the Tomb of Nabi Yusha' as Part of the Landscape Design after the Establishment of the State of Israel

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the departure of the Shi'ite inhabitants to Lebanon, and the creation of a new political border, changed the political and social realities in the region. From an immediate perspective, the war changed the map of sacred sites, since some of them were cut off from the social and cultural connections on which they had depended before 1948. The cultural landscape had to be redesigned, and to undergo adaptation to the aims of the young state.

Against the background of these changes, the place of the Nabi Yusha' tomb must be examined on two different levels which have many points of connection. The first level deals with religious presence in the landscape. The other level deals with the change from the religious presence to the national presence, and in effect with the establishment of Zionist-civilian 'cultic' places. These two levels together express the processes of landscape construction through the presence of significant buildings or of a human presence (religious in this instance). Under non-Jewish sovereignty, the strengthening of the historical and contemporary connection to the country was done through the marking the graves of the righteous and by creating a ceremonial presence through pilgrimages, and textually, through writing travel stories. But Jewish believers, especially from medieval times and onwards, did not have any interest in locating the tomb of the prophet Joshua in the Galilee Panhandle. The two cultic sites that were mentioned here, in Timnath-Serah in the mountains of Ephraim and in the Arbel Valley were בעלי הגיון פנימי יהודי and concerned the founding of traditions to strengthen the Jewish connection and presence by a general geographical view of the biblical lands or regionally of the Galilee. Jewish presence in the region of Ramon Naftali was created not far from there, in Kadesh Naftali, by marking the graves of Deborah and Barak, and of the sons of Jacob near them, as we mentioned above. We must distinguish between indicating the place of a tomb and the creation of a cult around it,

which in Judaism as well as in Islam are subject to controversy, but in Islam it was accepted at an earlier stage as an accepted matter.

Shaping of a cultural landscape in Nabi Yusha' as a sacred landscape did not withstand rivalry or competition with Jewish aims. As we have already seen, in spite of the political break from the Shi'ite area in Lebanon, the cult of the tomb was strengthened during the British Mandatory period. Although this was a period of a growing Jewish population in the country and of establishing a Zionist national connection with it, no Jewish reaction was aroused against the presence in the landscape around the tomb. Even though there was a struggle over the definition of borders for the national home in the eastern Galilee region, this struggle was mainly political and territorial. The Zionist national movement did not sanctify the country in a religious manner but in a historical-mythological manner. And therefore it found no interest in the struggle over holy places which were not considered as of national importance. The process of creating a relationship between the nation and the homeland in the geographical expanse was focused on memorial sites that became sanctified places related to the heroic struggle over political sovereignty in the country, whether historical or modern. The strengthening of the religious-collective tie to the country was not of any concern for the Zionist movement which was mostly secular, and thus even the tombs of other righteous men in the Galilee where a cult common to both Muslims and Jews had been held, was abandoned in this period of increasing national tension in the country, especially during and after the Arab Revolt in 1936.

In Safed, however, a committee was formed to preserve the holy places, headed by the Ashkenazi rabbi of Safed, Rabbi Avraham Leib Zilberman, who took the trouble to draw up a list of the holy places in order to preserve their memory and record their ownership which was gradually being neglected. This committee and the documented records it kept would have a central role to play when the state was established in the process of redesigning the sacred landscape in the Galilee. Although the figure Joshua bin Nun was central in Jewish mythology as being the leader in the process of conquering the country, a process that could have become central in establishing national Jewish consciousness, yet the main tradition for marking his tomb was in Samaria. No Jewish cult was held at the site itself, and any attempt to use his national-historical figure to strengthen Zionist claims on the Galilee would have been interpreted as a flagrant invention of a tradition that could not succeed publicly, whether Jewish or Muslim.

The relations with the Shi'ite population from the local Galilee viewpoint have changed over time. During the Mandate period the local Shi'ites had good connections with the local Zionist population. In particular, good relations were instilled in the memories of the children in of Kfar Giladi near Hunin and Abil al-Qamh. But with the exacerbation of the national conflict after the Arab Revolt, and especially after the Partition Plan of 1947 again separated the Shi'ite villages between the Galilee Panhandle and Lebanon, the Shi'ites identified themselves with the aims of Palestinian nationalism, and during the War of Independence the "Rescue Army" turned Southern Lebanon, and particularly the Shi'ite villages near the border, into jumping-off points for its activities in Israel.

The sovereignty that had changed with the establishment of the state altered the situation and led to new possibilities in the formation of the landscape. The Galilee Panhandle remained a border region but became a hostile place and the need to strengthen Jewish presence there was increased.

This area of great strategic importance was not a place for mass settlement. Its distance from the center of the country and its mountainous features was difficult for settlement and therefore required another mechanism to ensure dominance in the area.

During the first two decades of the State of Israel, in opposition to the Zionist movement, the state invested great efforts in changing the map of sacredness. Although the extent of visits to holy places and pilgrimage to them was limited, intensive activities were conducted to locate, mark and take possession of sacred sites. This activity was led by the leaders of Religious Zionism in the desire to strengthen the biblical link with the country. The overall responsibility for the holy places was given to the Ministry of Religion, and the person in charge of the matter was Shmuel Zangwill Kahana, the first director of the ministry. Kahana believed that the map of the state should be filled with sites of a traditional Jewish nature and was therefore engaged in gathering information and marking such places – even those that did not have any important Jewish cult attached to them. In some of the places the process of redesigning the landscape included transferring the sacred sites from one hand to another, and the ‘Judaization’ of several Muslim sacred tombs. The transition from a religious conception to a national religious conception was made possible through a special process of sanctification for the area in which the historical and religious background of the Land of Israel served to establish national Israeli hold on it after the State of Israel came into being. This process was accomplished through the use of ancient texts (Bible, Mishna and Talmud) that provided the justification for appropriating structures that were holy to Muslims and turning them into Jewish holy places and as a result for the Israelis.

This was an institutional process that did not have a consensus, and objections arose by religious circles that criticized on the principle the involvement of the state in designing the landscape. Places that were sacred to Islam were not converted, or because of legal complications the remaining Muslim sanctified property was handled by the Muslim and Druze departments that had already been established in August 1948 within the Ministry of Religion, headed by Dr. Haim Zeev Hirschberg. Frequently, even though the holy place and its surroundings were not officially nationalized, a process of actual appropriation was created through visits and the holding of prayers, and pilgrimage ceremonies, especially in view of the absence of any local Muslim inhabitants who had fled or were expelled from the Galilee in 1948. One of the principles that guided Kahana in designing the map of sacred places was finding a tomb “... near a road junction and populated settlements that could serve as visiting places for citizens and tourists that could fulfill their function in practice”.

Kahana, who used the Mandatory records of the Safed Committee for Holy Places, redesigned the sacred landscape of the Galilee. Prominent structures were built on some of the tombs which were fenced and cleaned. Some of the tombs which remained in the ruins of abandoned Arab villages or near them underwent local Judaization by those residing in the new Jewish settlements that were established, such as the tomb of Rabbi Ishmael the son of R. Yose the Galilean which the Muslims had previously identified as the tomb of Sheikh Ismail that remained standing in the ruins of the Arab village of Dalata, and the residents of the new Moshav Dalton set up near it began visiting it regularly.

Nabi Yusha' answers to all the criteria of strategic importance. It is located on an important road junction, and control over it is the key to control over the entire Western Galilee region. But in spite of the Jewish location of his tomb in Timnath-heres or Timnath-serah remained outside the borders of the state and was not accessible to Jewish cultic rites for a long period of time, it was not possible to move the burial traditions and to "Judaize" the Shi'ite tomb in the Galilee. As a result of this, a different mechanism was activated in designing the national landscape, a mechanism that is associated with the struggle over the country in 1948, in the sanctification of the cult of the fallen and the cult of independence. The British police fortress near the place of the tomb provided the solution. The fortress was built in 1936 as part of the attempt by the British to protect the northern border during the Arab Revolt. In April 1948, fierce battles were fought by Palmach fighters in the attempt to conquer the fortress. Two battles ended in failure, but the stories about the bravery of the fighters and especially about the self sacrifice in removing the wounded after the battle provided the basis for turning it (and the site as well) to one of the "sanctified" places in the heroic map of the war.

This was how the possibility was born to create new points of identification of a national character that would preserved the importance of the place and create a new symbolic presence. The story of the battle over Nabi Yusha' and the fall of 28 fighters turned it into one of the symbols of the Zionist struggle over the land. Along with the story of the battle were all the formative values of this struggle: bravery, courage, devotion to the cause, and loyal friendship. This last value was recently commemorated by the inauguration of the "Museum of Friendship" in the fortress building. The story of the battle of Nabi Yusha' and Malkia underwent a process of mythification, as for example over the question of failures in the battles and the reasons for them. The causes for the early failures of the Palmach which exacted such a heavy price was attributed to the invasion of a large force from the Lebanese army, a description that was disproved in the investigation by Yoav Gelber and others, and thus the Zionist myth of the few against the many was commemorated and strengthened.

In recent years, after the establishment of the state, the fortress became a focal point for pilgrimage. A poetic realization of the importance of the place and the creation of a new tradition around it can be read in a market oriented article that was published in the winter of 1951 in the Davar newspaper. The article presented the notes of Meir H. who had joined the tours organized by the Yatour Company, a touring company that prided itself on having guides who were "previous Haganah and IDF officers who specialized in the knowledge of the pathways in Israel". On Nabi Yusha' he wrote: "... Together with the mass immigration that was directed towards permanent settlement in Israel, there is also a large influx of tourists who want to see the big attractions of human endeavor: the establishment and building up of a young state through its struggle with economic hardships. In the meantime ... we breathe the heroic air of Metzudat Koah (Nabi Yusha') and the cool atmosphere of the Hermon ...indeed a wonderful tour. The eyes of the tourists are shining. These tours, accompanied by a full explanation, connect the tourist with the homeland – whether he is a newcomer in the country or a veteran who has not yet seen the whole expanse of it ..." The importance of the fortress was commemorated on a postal stamp that was issued for the third Independence Day of the young state.

Nabi Yusha' has not yet said his last word. A secret rivalry is being conducted between the sacred national site and the holy Shi'ite site. The Shi'ites of Southern Lebanon cherish the myth of this longed-for place and would like to reinstate the political conditions that would allow for the renewal of the cult in it under Lebanese sovereignty. In 1994, under Hezbollah pressure, an amendment was made in Lebanese civil law that the refugees of the seven villages and their descendants can receive Lebanese identity cards. The question whether they are Palestinian refugees of Lebanese citizens, and whether these seven villages are part of Palestine or of Lebanon, is a significant one in relation to the political claim over the territory – and in relation to the formation of yearnings for the land.

For a short period of time, beginning from the 1980s and until the retreat of Israel from Southern Lebanon in the year 2000, a border transit point was opened between Israel and Southern Lebanon at Meiss Ej-Jabal, and the Shi'ite citizens of Southern Lebanon could visit the tomb. When the border was closed again, this activity also ceased, but in recent years an active cult was renewed at the sit, although in a limited manner and not institutionalized. Shi'ites living in Israel, especially Shi'ite women married to Sunni Muslims, have visited the place, taken care of it, and held ceremonies there. In the past five years evidence of people staying at the place and holding cultic rituals there has been noted and documented. On the other side of the border, there is a growing phenomenon of Shi'ites 'watching from afar' in the direction of the sacred tomb, waiting for a political opportunity to renew the cult.

The reawakening of Shi'ite interest in the site has led to feeble attempts to establish a Jewish hold over the place. In 2012 markings were made on the walls of the shrine that mention the name of Rabbi Yose the Galilean (whose tomb is marked in Dalton) – and the inscriptions on the wall were made in white plaster. Books of the Psalms and other holy writings were found at the place which also testify to the attempt to establish a Jewish tradition there, although not connected with Joshua bin Nun himself.

The Jewish cult at the tomb site in Kafl Haris was renewed after the border change in 1967. After the Intifada of 2000, and especially during the past decade, the celebrations for the prophet on the anniversary of his death, on the 27th of Nisan, became a mass event that draws thousands of worshippers every year to visit the tomb to emphasize a Jewish presence at this place where sovereignty over it is still subject to political controversy and an uncertain future. The celebrations are conducted under the management of the 'Yesod Haolam' association, and in May 2015 it was reported that 10,000 worshippers had visited the site on the day of the celebrations – to mark the burial place of the one who had led the conquest of the country by the Children of Israel – and thus emphasizing the antiquity of the conquest and the ability of present-day sovereignty to hold mass cultic rituals in this place.

WORKS CITED

-
- Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Blackwell, 1999); E.C. Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, (London, 1976).
On building a 'national place', see: B.S. Morgan, 'Social Geography, Spatial Structure and Social Structure', *Geojournal*, 9 (1984), pp. 310.

Rolph uses the term 'significant place' from a wider perspective than a symbolic expanse. See: E. C. Rolph, *Place and Placelessness* (above, note 1).

For example: D. Mitchell, *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction* (Blackwell, 2000). In Israel, the prominent researchers in this field are Maoz Azariahu and Idit Zertal.

Another issue is the economic one that can arise in the establishment if the cult of the place does indeed attract many believers around whom extensive economic activity is thus created.

Nurit Lisovsky, "Written on the Landscape: The Use of Historical Sources in an Archaeological Find and a Visual Presentation to Reconstruct the Changes that Occurred in Sacred Places in the Galilee", *Cathedra*, 120 (2006): 55-78. See especially p. 57. [Hebrew].

Walī (Arabic, plural 'awliyā') is an Arabic word of which the literal meanings include "custodian", "protector", "helper", and "friend." In the vernacular, it is most commonly used by Muslims to indicate an Islamic saint, otherwise referred to by the more literal "friend of God." In the traditional Islamic understanding of saints, the saint is portrayed as someone "marked by [special] divine favor ... [and] holiness", and who is specifically "chosen by God and endowed with exceptional gifts, such as the ability to work miracles." The codified articulation of the doctrine of saints was put forth by Islamic scholars very early on in Muslim history, with the early Muslim thinkers interpreting particular verses of the Quran and various hadith to constitute "documentary evidence" of their existence

Gib Hamilton, *Dirasat fi hadart al-'Islam*. 2 nd ed. Tran. Ihsan Abbas and others, Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm lilmalayin, 1964, p. 283; Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, Volume II (London, 1971), pp. 290-316.

Philip Hitti, *Tarikh al-'Arab-Mtawwal*. Beirut: Dar al-Kashshaf liltiba' wa-al-nashr, 1965, 2: 528.

Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-'Islamiyya. Teharn: Jihan Tehran, N.d. 13: 415, where he mentions how the tomb of the 'shahid' in Islam became a Mazar and a place of pilgrimage.

See: Abu al-Hasan 'Ali 'Abu Bakr al-Harawi. *Kitab al-'Isharat 'Ila Ma'rifat al-Ziyarat*. ed. Janine Sourdell-Thomine, Damascus: The French Institute for Arabic Studies, 1953. Known only by the name of Al-Harawi.

Ibid., pp. 20-21. For example, he brings a description of the tombs he visited in the region of Acre and Tiberias.

See: Al-Haqiqa wa-al-majaz fi rihta 'ila bilad al-Sham, Introd. and ed. Ahmad 'abd al-Majid Haridi

(Cairo: Al-hay'ah al-Misriyya al-'Ammah lilkitab, 1986.

Goldziher, *Muslim*, 2:262-340.

Yosef Sadan, "Three New Arabic Sources in Praise of Holy Land from Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries", *Cathedra* no. 11 (1979): 187-188. [Hebrew].

Maqam: A mausoleum. Smaller shrines are called mazār, mashhad, or qarīh and qabr, "tomb."

For example: Ahmad Samih al-khalidi, *Rihlat fi diar al-sham, silsilat al-Thaqafa al-'ammah*. Jaffa: al-maktabah al-'Asriyyah, 1946, pp. 7-12.

Meir et al., *Religious Buildings of the Muslims in the State of Israel* (Jerusalem: State Press, 1950), pp. 11-44; Cnaan, Tawfik, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (London: Luzac & Co., 1927), p. 2. He mentions, for example, that in Kfar 'Awarta located 10 km southeast of Shechem, there are 14 wali which are sanctified by the local inhabitants. On p. 1 he notes that there is no Muslim village in Israel that does not have a Wali or a sacred place. The sacred places for the Muslims can be a Mazar a shrine, a tomb, a tree, a sheikh, a cave, a spring or well, a rock, and a heap of stones.

Shmuel Tamari, "The Shrine of Nabi Musa near Jericho", *Cathedra*, 11 (1979), p. 171 [Hebrew].

A Saint or a holy person buried in a shrine, Also a title given to 'Ali who is spiritually close to God.

Goldziher, *Muslim*, 2:264; 'Abd Allah Ibn Muhammad Al-Siddiq, *Al-Hujaj al-Bayyinat fi 'Ithbat al-Karamat*, (Cairo: Dar al-ta'lif, 1970, p. 87.

'Izz al-Din 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn 'Ad al-Salam al-'Aslami, *Tarhib 'Ahl al-'Islam fi sakan al-Sham*. ed. Samih al-Khalidi. Jerusalem: Al-Maktaba al-Khalidiyya, 1940, pp. 7-8, 16.

Meir, et al., *Buildings*, pp. 10-11; According to Goldziher, *Muslim*, 2:281 the cult of saints and visits to their tombs began in the second century of the Hegira, but in a much simpler way.

Al-Harawi, *Al-'Isharat*, p. 20. He mentions there, for example, his visit to the village of Kfar Kana near Nazareth and notes that it has the shrine of Yunis (Jonah) and the grave of his son. On p. 21 he mentions Kfar Manda, and the grave of Zippora the wife of Moses. In his opinion the village also has the well from which Moses removed the rock that covered it and watered the sheep, and that this rock still remains

until today. He relates, in addition, that there are tombs for two sons of Jacob, Asher and Naphtali. On p. 22 he says that in the village of Kabul north of Shfaram there are tombs of another two sons of Jacob, Reuben and Shimon.

Mustafa 'As'ad Jabir, *The Visits of 'Abd Al-Ghani ibn 'Isma'il ibn 'Abd Al-Ghani al-Nabulsi in Syria And Land of Israel according to his book al-Haqiqa wa-al-majaz fi al-rihla 'ila Bilad al-Sham, Misr wa-al-Hijaz*. M.A. thesis, University of Bar Ilan, 1977, pp. 113-114 where he refers to the tomb of the prophet Salah and the "Mashhad" of 'Ali ibn 'Abu Talib in "In al-Baqar" in Acre. On p. 115 he mentions Shfaram and the Wali in it. And on pp. 118-120 he mentions the village of "Ya'bad" and the tombs of the "Awliya" in it such as Sheikh Muhammad al-maghazi, sheikh Zayid, and sheikh Nasrallah al-Qadri.

See: Mohammedan Saints (above, n. 16).

Al-Khalidi & others, *bayan 'ila al'alam al-'islami 'ammah 'an al-'amakim 20, al-muqaddasa fi Falastin, Jerusalem, Bayt Al-Maqdis press, 1932*.

Tamari, Shrine, pp. 153-180; Idem, "The Mosque of Nabi Yunus in Halhul (Judah)", *University of Bar-Ilan Year Book, Judaic Studies and the Humanities*, 18-19 (Bar-Ilan University Press, 1981), pp. 287-306; Yosef, Sadan, "The Shrine of Nabi Musa Between Jericho and Damascus: History of the Competition Between Two Sacred Sites", *Hamizrah Hehadash*, no. 28 (1979): 22-38.

Ze'ev. S. Safrai, "The Establishment of the Cult of Sacred Tombs in Israel", in: *Galilee Studies*. ed. Tziona Grossmark and others, Tel-Hai, 2009, pp. 101-134. The more ancient cults can be derived from the opposition of Jesus to the cult of tombs, which indicates the existence of this popular cult. The few references in rabbinical literature testifies more to the opposition of the Sages than to the popular practices. The reservations of the Sages can be derived from the commentary on the death of Moses of whom it was explicitly said he was buried in the land of Moab, and 'no one knew the place of his burial until today' (Deuteronomy 34:6), so that his burial place would not be turned into a site for sacrifices and ritual cults. The cult of sacred places was considered as idolatry and as communing with the dead. See: J. Prawer, "Descriptions of the Journey of Jews in the Land of Israel during the Period of the Crusades in the 12th Century", *Cathedra*, 40 (1986): 31-62. See especially p. 32.

Ibid., pp. 31-62.

In the 12th and 13th centuries there were cultic gatherings at sacred places in the Galilee. Reiner claims that in religious life, the saint played a central role in the world of the individual because of the magical qualities ascribed to him. See: Elhanan Reiner, "Between Joshua and Yeshua: From a Biblical Story to a Local Myth", *Zion*, 61/3 (1996): 282-317. See especially p. 283.

Prawer (see above, note 26); Among Eastern Jewry there is a more widespread belief in the special attributes of the saint and the place of his burial to create changes in personal situations, which is influenced by the pilgrimage of Arabs to sacred Muslim tombs. Among European pilgrims, a pilgrimage had more of a connection with the historical and mystical significance of the tomb location. See: Elhanan Reiner, "Immigration and Pilgrimage to the Land of Israel, 1099-1517", Ph.D. thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1988, p. 222.

Numbers, 13: 8, 16; Chronicles I, 7:87.

Numbers, 14:6-9.

Exodus, 33:11; 14:9 ; Numbers 11: 28.

During the entry into Canaan, while crossing over the Jordan River, two hills on the banks of the river joined together to form a bridge so that the Israelites could pass over the river. Joshua, Ch. 3-4. Jericho was conquered by the blowing of trumpets, and the heavens themselves were recruited in the battle of Gibeon when Joshua command the sun and the moon to stop their movements: "Sun, stand still upon Gibeon and Moon in the valley of Ayalon", Joshua, 10:12.

Midrash Aggada, Exodus 24, See also: M. Cohen, *Joshua bin Nun the First Conqueror*, Sinai., vol. 30, 1952. Qur'an 20-29:1. Compare: Numbers 14:6 ff.

See: 'Izz Al-'din Ibn Al-Hasan 'Ali Ibn Abu Al-Karam commonly who Known by the name of Ibn Al-'Athir, *Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, ed. Umar 'Abd Al-Salam Tadmuri, Beirut: Dar Al-Kitab Al-'Arabi press, 4th ed., 2004, 1: 174- 176.

With regard to his military character, Arab tradition is divided on the question whether the conquest of the country and the victory over Amalek and Balaam were done during the days of Moses or only during the

days of Joshua. According to the story, Joshua asked the sun to stop its course in order to complete the conquest before the Sabbath day began. The sun, which at the beginning refused to disobey the divine command of its course, agreed to his request.

Rashid Al-Din Muhammad Ibn Shahrashub, *Manaqib 'Aal Abi Talib*, Oum: Mu'assasat Al-'Alamiyya lilnashr, 1959, 3: 276.

This is contrary to the phenomenon of imparting holiness to various places through division and definition of roles (one place linked with the birth of the saintly figure and another with the foot imprint of the same figure, as evidence for a visit by that figure to a certain place, marking the significant stages of life, etc.), which brought esteem and visitors to these places for purposes of benefit and income.

For details, see for example: Sadan, "The Shrine of Nabi Musa..." (above, note 28).

Joshua, 24:30.

Elhanan Reiner, "Between Joshua and Yeshua" (above, note 28). See especially p. 284; Von Detlef Jericke, "Josuas Tod und Josuas Grab Ein redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie", *ZAW* 108 (1996), p. 359.

Muhammd Dhunaybat and Samir Al-'Adawi. *Maqamat al-Sahabah wa-Adhrihat al-Shuhada'* Website: www.alghad.jo/index.

Nasir Khusru, *Sifr Nameh*. Tehran: Sharikat sihami kitabha jibi, 1071, p. 17.

E. Elisseeff, "Ma'arrat al-Nu'man

" *EI2* (1986), 5: 926 b; Shihab al-Din Yaqut ibn 'Abd Allah al-Hamawi al-Rumi al-Baghdadi, *Mu'jam al-Buldan*, Beirut: Dar 'Ihya' al-Turath, 1970, 5: 156. It should be noted that Yaqut cast doubt on the tomb being that of Nabi Yusha'.

See the website: www.odabasham.nex/index.

See the website: www.takhtefoulad.org/a/r!a!b!c!m!a!z!a!r!h!a!1htm

For details, see: Muhammad Ibn 'Ahmad 'bu 'Abu Bakr, al-Maqdisi. *Ahsan al-taqasim fi Ma'rifat al-'Aqalim*. 2nd ed. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906, p.188.

Doron Bar, *To Sanctify the Land: The Jewish Sacred Places in the State of Israel, 1948-1968*, Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2007, p. 238 [Hebrew].

Joshua, 24:30..

For a discussion on geographical landscape design and its adaptation to biblical description, see: Reiner (above, n. 28), p. 286.

Ibid., p. 288.

Avraham Yaari, *Legends of the Land of Israel* (1943), p. 80 [Hebrew].

A geographical tradition can be found in the Biram forest where, from the 13th century, the tombs of Esther and Mordechai are mentioned. The transfer of the burial tradition to Biram from Hamadan in Iran is based on a tradition that the son of Esther, Koresh (Cyrus) transferred her bones to the Land of Israel.

Metudela mentions on the tomb of Barak ben Avinoam in Kadesh Naftali and notes that there are no Jews there. "The Travels of Binyamin Metudela in the Land of Israel and Syria", in: Avraham Yaari (ed.), *Travels in the Land of Israel* (1946), pp. 31-48. See especially p. 45 [Hebrew].

In the book: *Dialogue of the Righteous - Tombs of the Righteous in the North, their Lives, Formulations and Prayers*, written by Rabbi Avraham Yohanan Shushan (Tiberias, 1999), as an updated guide to the tombs of the righteous in the Galilee, there is mention of the tomb complex in Kadesh including the burial sites of Asher and Naftali, the sons of Jacob (also in Kadesh without marking the location of the tomb) but there is no mention of Joshua bin Nun. The book "Seder Hadorot" was written by Yehiel ben Shlomo Halperin, the rabbi of Minsk, in 1769, and he quotes earlier works, amongst them "Glilot Eretz Yisrael".

Zeev Vilnai, *Sacred Monuments in the Land of Israel* (1963), p. 151 [Hebrew].

Waypoint 2022279 East, 202301 North 128100. Husayn Lubani al-Damuni, al-Jalili. *Mu'jan 'Asma' al-Mudun walqura al-Filastiniyya*. Beirut: Markaz bahith lildirasat, 2003, p. 243.

The Shi'ites in Southern Lebanon, especially those in Jabal Amil and Beqa' Vally, and in Keserwan are called the Mutawila (sing. Mutawili) since the 17th century CE, according to Ahmad Rida

(for details, see: Ahmad, Rida. "al-Matawila walshi'afi Jabal 'Amil", *al-'Irfan*, vol.11, p. 242.

According to Muhsin al-'Amin there are two possible reasons for the Shi'ites in Southern Lebanon to be called the Mutawila. One is that during battles, the Shi'ites used to say "mutt waliyyan li'ali" [die when you are loyal to Ali]. The second is that the Shi'ites believe in the principle of wilaya [loyalty] to Ali

and his sons (for details, see: Muhsin, al-'Amin. *Khitat Jabal 'Amil*. Beirut: Dar al-'A'lamiyya, 1983, p. 67. He adds that the word Mutawili is derived from the verb "tawalla" "the root of which indicates loyalty 'wala'", that is to say the love of their leaders, the family of the Prophet. (For details, see: muhsin al-'Anim, 'A'yan al-Shi'a, 1:20; Muhammad Kurd, 'Ali. *Khitat al-Shamm*. Damascuse: Dar al-Mufid, 1928, 6: 251-256.

It should be noted that Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi recently stressed that in the principles of the Shi'ite faith, the pure Shi'ites were called "Mutawalli al-'A'immah" [faithful to the imams] (for details see: Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *Le guide divin dans le Shi'isme original: Aux sources de l'esoterisme en islam* (Verdier, Lagrasse, 1992), p. 74 note no. 151. See also: Sabrina, Mervan. *Harakat al-'Islah al-Shi'i*. trans. Haytham al-'Amin. Beirut: Dar al-Nahar li'nashr, 2003, pp. 31-32.

The villages are: Hunin (today called Margaliot), Tarbikha (today Shomera), Al-Nabi Yusha' (today near Metzudat Koach), Salha (today Kibbutz Yaron), Qadas (today Emek Kadesh), Al-Malkhia (today Kibbutz Malkia), Abil al-Qamh (today Kfar Yuval). Six of them belong to the district of Safed, while Tarbikha (today Shomera) used to belong to the district of Acre. For details, see: al-Rayyis, al-Qura al-Janubiyya al-Sab', p.76. The villages were under the French Mandate, and were annexed to the British Mandate on March 7, 1923, in the Paulet-Newcombe agreement. Even after the signing of the agreement, the inhabitants of the villages continued to carry Lebanese citizenship. The agreement became valid only on August 30, 1924, when the villages were officially annexed to Palestine. For details, see: Muhammad, Basim. *Al-'Ittijahat al-siyasiyya fi Jabal 'Amil 1918-1926*. Beirut: a doctoral dissertation, Saint Joseph's University, 1983, p. 201; 'Abd al-Fattah 'Abu 'Aliah, International Conference on Bilad al-Shamm History, April 19-24, 1980, Jordanian University, Amman, 1980, p. 19.

On Jabal Amil and its importance to the Shi'ite world, see for example: Abisaab Rula, "Shi'ite Beginnings and Scholastic Tradition in Jabal Amil in Lebanon", *The Muslim World*, Vol. 89, No. 1 (1999), pp. 1-21.

The family was known by the name of 'al-Fakih' (wise in religious law) after the name of their grandfather Salih Fakih who was learned in religious law during the reign of Ali Bek Asad. The most famous of the family was Sheikh Mustafa al-Ghul, and some claim that his three sons: Mahmud, Yusuf and Shahada, were the first to settle in Nabi Yusha'. In 1934, Juwad, the son of Yusuf, Said, the son of Mahmud, 'Abd al-Husayn, the son of Dawud and the sons of Shahada: Mahmud Husayn, Mahmud Hasan, and Mahmud Ali, continued to be in charge of the shrine. For details see: Fayiz, Hasan al-Rayyis. *Al-Qura al-Janubiyya al-Sab'*. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Wafa', 1985, p. 47, footnote no.2; 'Al Sulayman al-'Amili, al-Bayadi. *Buldan Jaba 'Amil: Qila'uhu wamadarisuhu wajusuruhi wamurujuhu wamatahahinuhu wajibaluhi wamashahidhi*. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Da'ira, 1995, p. 545.

The shrine of Nabi Yusha' and the village near it were registered in the land registry (tabu) as sacred land in the year 1282 Hegira / 1865 CE, and the person in charge of it "Tawliya" was Mahmud Yusuf al-Ghul. For details, see: al-Byadi, Buldan Jabal 'Amil, p.454; *Khitat Jabal 'Amil*, pp. 307-308.

Agreement for neighborly relations, Doar Hayom, April 22, 1926.

Haganah archives, Tel Aviv, File No. 4016229; Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, File No. 61026104..

al-Byadi, *Buldan Jabal 'Amil*, p.111.

Haganah archives, 226/105.

'Aminah Abu Hajar, *Mawsu'at al-Mudun wa-al-Qura al-Filistiniyya*. Amman: Drar 'Usamah li'nashr wa-altawzi', 2002, p. 129.

Zeev Vilnai, *Sacred Monuments in the Land of Israel* (1963), p. 151.

This sentence was taken from the Qur'an [103:3].

This saying is associated with the Battle of Hunayn in 630 CE between the Muslims and the heretics. According to the story, the Muslim army fled from the enemy and only Ali remained on the battlefield and fought against twenty-four thousand fighters. According to Shi'ite tradition, God came to the assistance of Ali and revealed to him the Angel Gabriel, and then a voice was heard from heaven: There is no sword like the sword of Dhu al-Fiqr and no hero like Ali. For details, see: 'Abu ja'far Rashid al-Din Muhammad Ibn 'Ali, Ibn Shahrashub al-Mazandarani. *Manaqib 'Al Abi Talib*. Qumm: mu'assat al-'Alamma li'nashir, 1959, 428; Ibn Abu al-Hadid, 'Abd al-Hamid Ibn Hibat 'Allah. *Sharh nahj al-Balagha*. Qum: 'Ayatu'llah Mar'ashi Najafi, 1983, 2:422; Abu al-Fath al-Karajuki, Muhammad Ibn 'Ali Ibn 'Uthman. *Kanz al-Fawa'id*. ed. 'Abd'Allah Ni'mah. Qum: Dar al-Dhakha'ir, 1989,496; Al-Hasan Ibn Yusuf al-Mutahhar. *Kashf al-yaqin fi fada'il 'Amir al-mu'minin*. ed. Husayn al-Dargahi, Tehran: Mu'assasat al-tiba'ah walnashr, 1991, p.411.

As for the sword of Dhu al-Fiqar, Shi'ite sources say that it originated in the Garden of Eden and that the Angel Gabriel brought it to the Prophet and he gave it to Ali. There are many traditions about this sword. For details, see: Khalid, Sindawi. "Sayf Dhu al-Fiqar fi al-'adab al-Shi'i", *Al-Karmil: Studies in Language and Literature J*, 2000-2001, Vol. 21-22, 201-217. [Arabic]
The sentence was taken from the Qur'an, Sura 55, verse 26.

On trees and their cult, see for example: Shlomo Ilan, "The Sacred Tree: Cause for the Preservation of the Ancient Landscape", *Ofakim be-Geographia*, 1 (1975): 81-86 [Hebrew]; Eli Schiller, "Trees near the Tombs of Saints", *Ariel*, 117 (1996): 147-149 [Hebrew]; Nurit Lisovsky, "On Trees and on 'the Place': Cultural, Natural and Visual Characteristics of Sacred Landscapes in the Land of Israel", *Cathedra*, 111 (2004): 41-74 [Hebrew].

In many places where a sacred tree is damaged or cut down, the reconstruction of a landscape and the replanting of trees is carried out in order to preserve the holy place.

T. Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (Jerusalem, 1927), pp. 30-31. The frequency of a certain type of tree is also connected with the object of sanctification in Qur'anic and Muslim tradition. Another survey that was conducted by Admoni and Schmidt ?? ערמוני ושמיד between Shechem and Jerusalem, distinguished between different cultivated types in sacred places near settlements and the wild types outside the settlements that were sanctified later on, and only a few were chosen and planted by human hands. H. Admoni, A. Schmidt, "Survey of Old Trees in Central Samaria and the Land of Benjamin", *Rotem* (1987): 27-56. ?? 5 ש"ס חל

Ben-Ami writes about this phenomenon as very widespread among the Jews of Morocco. Y. Ben-Ami, *The Adoration of Saints among Moroccan Jewry* (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 77ff [Hebrew].

For example: Hanging the clothes worn by the sick person in order that the saint will 'uproot' the illness and transfer it from the clothes to the tree. Zohar Amar, "The Cult of Trees near the Tombs of Saints in Jewish and Muslim Tradition", *Ariel*, 117-118(1996): 155-160.

Shukri 'Arraf, *Tabaqat al-'Anbiya' wa-al-'Awliya' al-Salihin fi Al-'Ard al-Muqaddasa*. Tarshiha: Makhkhul brother printing, 1993. 2: 139.

For details, see: Muhammad jabir, 'Al Safa. *Jabal 'Amil*. Beirut: Dar Mu'jam Matn al-Lughah, 1960, pp. 116-121; Muhammad, Kurani. *Al-Judhur al-Tarikhiyya lilmuqawama al-'Islamiyya fi Jabak 'Amil*. Beirut: Dar al-Wasila, 1993, pp. 85-86.

Mustafa, Abbasi. *Qura Qada' Safad*. N.b, N.p, 1985, p.238; al-Rayyis, al-Qura al-Janubiyya al-Sab', p.39; Mustafa Murad, *al-Dabbagh.Biladuna Falastin, Kafr Qari'*: Dar al-Huda, 1988, chapter 6, part 2, pp. 198-199.

al-Bayadi, *BuldanJabal 'Amil*, p.453; al-Rayyis, al-Qura al-Janubiyya al-Sab', pp.39-40.

His full name was Ibrahim ibn Yahya ibn Muhammad ibn Najim Suleiman al-Mahzumi al-Amali (1741-1800). He was born in al-Taiba in Southern Lebanon, migrated to the city of Isfahan in Iran where he remained for ten years, and then settled in Damascus until the day of his death. The collection of his poems are in his handwriting. Among others, he composed "al-Sirat al-Mustaqim" on the subject of Shi'ite religious law. For details about him, see: Khalid Sindawe, "The Shi'ite Poet Ibrahim Ibn Yahya al-Amali (1741-1799) A Faithful Reflection of his Age", *Al-Karmil: Studies in Language and Literature*, 2007, vol. 27, 37-94; Khayr al-Din, al-Zirikli. *Al-'A'lam*. 7th ed. Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm lilmayin, 1986, 1: 80; Muhsin, al-Husayn al-'Amili. 'a'yan al-Shi'a. ed. Hasan al-'Anim. Beirut: Dar al-Ta'aruf lilmatbu'at, 1986, 2:237-248; 'Abd al-Majid, Zuraqit. "al-Shi'r al-'Amili fi al-Nisf al-Thani min al-Qarn al-Thamin 'Ashar, Shi'r al-Shaykh 'Ibrahim Ibn Yahya namudhajan", in the following website: www.shahrodi.com/al-mehaj/almen28/min28006.htm. (accessed date April 20, 2020)

It is not clear whether the place was chosen according to the will of al-Mashiah or by his successor, the grandson of his brother, Ali Bek al-Asad.

Muhammad Ibrahim Al-Sihi, *Al-fann wal'imara 'imda Al-'Arab*, Cairo: Maktabat Nahdat Misr press, 1964, p.15.

His full name is: Ibrahim Ibn Sadiq Ibn 'Ibrahim Ibn Yahya Al-'amili Al-Tibi.

He lived during the years 1806-1867. He was a poet, a resident of the village al-Taiba in Jabal Amel in Southern Lebanon, and studied Shi'ite religious law in the city of Najaf for 27 years. For details about him, see: Muhsin Al-Husayni Al-'Amili, "A'yan Al-Shi'a, Beirut: Al-'Insaf press, 1960, 5:214- 273;

Khayr Al-Din Al-Zirikli, *Al-'Alam*. Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm lilmalayin Press, 7th, 1986, 1:43; Muhammad Taqi Al-Faqih, *Jabal 'Amilfi Al-Tarikh*, Beirut: Dar Al-'Adwa'press, 1st ed., 1986, p.430.

The Shi'ite population in Lebanon was concentrated in two areas: Jabal Amel and Baalbek. During the 1940s they were between 20-25 % of the Lebanese population and were considered as an extremely backward community. The family of al-Asad continued to be the leading family in the region and was centered in the village of Taiba.

The month of Sha'ban is the eighth month of the year in the Muslim calendar, and according to Shi'ite tradition had many good attributes and great blessings. The twelfth imam in the Shi'ite imamism was born in this months. The night of the mid-month had special qualities such as Laylat al-Qadr "Night of Power" (fate) when God allows angels to descend to earth and opens the gates of Paradise so that all requests are granted on that day. According to tradition, whoever prays on that night will be pardoned by God for all his sins, and all his requests will be granted. See:

Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Al-Nu'man Al-'Ukburi al-Baghdadi, *Masar Al-Shi'a fi Mukhtasar Tarikh Al-Shari'a*. Qumm: The International conference of al-Shaykh al-Mufid's Millennium. 1st ed.1431/1992, p. 61-63.

On this same night, according to tradition, God protects the believers from the fires of Hell, and therefore Ali used to pray all through this night. In this month, the Shi'ites believe that God increases the livelihood of the faithful and also recompenses them seventy-fold for every act of kindness. This is the night in which God is glorified by the angels who carry the seat of honor and by his servants and believers who fast and recite the prayers of the night. For details, see: Muhammad Ibn Ali IbnAl-Husayn Ibn Musa Ibn Babawayhi Al-Qummi, *Fada'il al-Ashhur al-thalatha*, ed.Mirza Ghulam Rida 'Irfanyan. Najaf: Al-Adab press, 1397/1976, p. 45, no.22' p.46 no. 23' p. 46 no.24.

Mawasim A popular annual feast or festival celebrated at sanctuaries.

The month of Ramadan is the ninth month of the year in the Muslim calendar. Its holiness derives from the Qur'anic tradition according to which it was first brought down to Muhammad. The Qur'an was revealed on Laylat al-Qadr, one of the last nights in the month of Ramadan (it is assumed that this is the 27th of the month) in which the decrees of God over mankind are carried out. Shi'ite sources add that this is the master month and the springtime for believers, since the gates of Paradise are opened while the gates of hell in which the demons are chained are locked on this day. For details, Al-Shaykh Al-Mufid, *Masar al-Shi'a*, p.27..

Zvi Ilan, *Travel Sites in the Land of Israel: Guide to the Region of the North* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1982), p. 23 [Heb rew].

Al-Dabbagh, *Biladuna Falastin*, Chapter 6, Part2, p.228.

The combination of historical Zionist memory in the public sphere and the creation of national cultic places had already begun during the period of the Yishuv. For example, in the creation of monuments such as the one in Tel Hai that has become a place of pilgrimage and ceremonial rites. On civilian cults, see for example: Azariahu, Maoz. *State Cults: Independence celebration and perpetuation of fallen 1948- 1958*, Kibbutz Sde Boker: The Ben-Gurion Heritage Institute, 1995 [Hebrew]

See, for example: Hedva Ben-Yisrael, "A Land Sanctified by Theory and Practice of Modern Nationalism", in: Hedva Ben-Israel, ed., *In the Name of the Nation: Essays and Articles on Nationalism and Zionism* (Kiryat Sde-Boker, 2004), pp. 151-168 [Hebrew]. On Zionism as a 'civilian religion' which encourages the creation of civilian cults, see: Charles S. Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

The formation of a collective memory around heroic national fighters was focused on later figures such as the Maccabees or the figure of Bar Kochba. Thus the central place for the construction of a burial site as a sacred historical and national but non-religious area was the identification of the burial place of the Maccabees near Modiin. The site, which is still archaeologically uncertain, was "adopted" in 1909 by the pupils of Gymnasia Herzlia who were touring the area before the festival of Hanukka. The general geographical area of Modiin was located with certainty as the place where the Hasmonean rebellion had begun. After the Second World War, the Maccabi movement began the tradition of torch races around the tomb which developed into a full secular national cult that suited the portrayal of the Maccabees as popular fighters who fought for the independence of their people - and were victorious against all odds. On the figure of Judah Maccabee as a national hero, see: Eliezer Don-Yehiya, "Hanukka

and the Myth of the Maccabees in Zionist Ideology and Israeli Society", *The Jewish Journal of Sociology*, 34/1 (1992): 5-23. On the identification of the burial site of the Maccabees by the pupils of Gymnasia Herzlia, see, for example: Molly Brug, "Gymnasia Herzlia Discovers the graves of the Maccabees, 1907-1911: For the Study of Collective Memory and National Identity", *Iyyunim be-Tekumat Yisrael*, 20 (2010): 169-192 [Hebrew].

We would like to thank Guy Ma'yan for the information on this subject.

Reuven Erlich, "In the Lebanese Thicket" The policy of the Zionist movement and the State of Israel towards Lebanon—1918-1958. Tel Aviv: maarachot, 2000, p.272 In a report by the Haganah Intelligence Services it was written that the inhabitants of the village Al-Nabi Yusha' had no connections with the Jews in the surrounding area and were not serving as guards or workers, but their "relations with all the neighbors were normal". Haganah archives, File No. 226/105.

Doron Bar (above, note 49), p. 11.

Kahana letter to the Minister of Religion, July 20, 1948, State archives, 98,Gal, 14917/15

Doron Bar, "Between Muslim and Jewish Holiness", *Israel* 22 (2014): 133-158. See especially p. 134 [Hebrew].

One of the great opposers was Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz. Doron Bar, "The Sacred Places in the State of Israel", *Derekh Agada*, 9 (2006): 17-24. See especially p. 23 [Hebrew].

Quotation from the letter of Kahana to the Minister of Religion, Shapira, July 22, 1954, p. 39.

On the process in detail, see: Doron, Bar. *Between Muslim and Jewish Holiness: The beginning of the Judaism process of the Muslim holy places in the State of Israel 1948-1967*.2014, *The Journal of Israeli History: Politics, Society, Culture*. vol. 22, pp. 13-158.

The fortress was a Taggart Fortress, one of the seven fortresses erected along the northern border at dangerous positions: Bassa (Ya'ara), Tarbikha (Shomera), Sa'sa (Sasa), Salha (Avivim), Nabi Yusha', Ein Tina (Nahal Amud) Mittala (Metula).

It received the name of "Nabi Yusha' Police Station" because of its proximity to the tomb and the village.

The name of the police station was changed to Metzudat Koach, for the 28 Palmach fighters who were killed at that place on the 15th and 20th of April 1948. The police station of Nabi Yusha' was finally conquered on May 17 by a Palmach force together with the assistance of the air force - in a battle that was considered the first victory of the State of Israel.

On the cults of the War of Independence, see: Ma'oz, Azariahu. *State Cults: Independence celebration and perpetuation of fallen 1948- 1958*, Kibbutz Sde Boker: The Ben-Gurion Heritage Institute. [Hebrew].

The museum was built at the initiative of Yehuda Dekel, a Palmach fighter. The museum is part of the state heritage sites.

See the discussion on the question of myth formation around the Nabi Yusha' battles in: Guy Ma'yan, Reuven Erlich, "Integrative Method for the Study of the 1948 War: The Case of the Malkia Battles, May-June, 1948", *Historia*, 6 (2000):97-138 [Hebrew].

Meir H., "With Yatour to Galilee: Notes of a Tourist", *Davar*, November 16, 1951 [Hebrew].

Blogs on the subject can be seen in the website:

<http://www.palestineremembered.com/Acre/Tarbikha/MessageBoard49.html>

Photographs testifying to the existence of a limited cultic ritual are sometimes uploaded into the Internet in order to sharpen the memory of the Shi'ites about this place . See, for example:

<http://www.palestineremembered.com/Safad/al-Nabi-Yusha'/Picture69257.html>

The association 'Ohale Tzadikim' tried to mark the site as the tomb of Rabbi Yehoshua Rihana, but this attempt did not succeed, was not documented, and in fact failed.